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## THE NORTH GREENLAND EXPEDITION.\*

The steamer *Kite* arrived at St. John's, Newfoundland, on the 21st of September, bringing Mr. Peary and his companions, Matthew Henson and Hugh Lee, from their two years' exile in North Greenland, a period marked by steadfast devotion to duty, and unfaltering courage in the face of accumulating dangers. Like so many other heroic enterprises in the far North, this also has met with undeserved defeat. The story of the past year is told in the following letter reprinted from the New York *Sun*, of September 22:

ST. JOHN'S, N. F., Sept. 21.—The third night after the *Falcon* left me off the Petawak Glacier I camped near the head of Oliks Bay, in Inglefield Gulf, to hunt deer. We had encountered but little ice, and the voyage northward to Inglefield Gulf in a whaleboat had not been arduous. A short stop was made at the Bird Cliffs of Saunders Island to shoot.

We reached Oliks Bay just in time to escape a furious southeaster of three days' duration, which kept my hunters imprisoned under the shelter of rocks unable to get back to camp. The whaleboat had to be nearly filled with stones to prevent its being blown away. We reached Anniversary Lodge [Peary's headquarters at the head of Bowdoin Bay, Inglefield Gulf], on September 6, with five hundred pounds of venison, birds and hare. Bowdoin Bay was a chaos of icebergs and large pans of ice cemented by heavy young ice. The boat was left several miles from the Lodge. Evidently the season would be very short. There was no time to be lost in obtaining my winter's supply of meat and getting it to the Lodge before navigation closed.

I had intended immediately upon my return to take Mr. Lee and the natives with me to Kangardluksoah hunting, but his lonely, anxious vigil during my absence had left Lee in no condition to go or to be left alone again. Matt Henson left with the party of natives twenty hours after our arrival, and returned on September 16, with six deer and several hare. On the following day, with Lee, I went to Karnah [near the entrance to Bowdoin Bay], whence I took my other whaleboat and all the able-bodied native men in the settlement to Cape Cleveland, hunting walrus. The natives, with a boat I had loaned them, had already killed twenty, and the animals were becoming somewhat shy, but I harpooned and secured seven before the rapidly forming young ice compelled a retreat.

The young ice and the head wind delayed our return until September 27, when one boat load of meat was landed at Anniversary Lodge. A second load was landed on September 30. These two days and one while I was at Cape Cleveland were the only days during the season when the whaleboat could reach the Lodge without being dragged over the ice. On October 1 the bay was frozen over for the winter.

September was cold and stormy. The winter's meat supply for ourselves and the

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\* See the *Journal of the AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY*, Vol. XXVI, 1894, pp. 397-406.

dogs being assured, my caches of provisions on the ice-cap next demanded our attention. Two days after the last load of walrus had been secured, Mr. Lee, with Matt Henson and the native Huktah, left the Lodge to dig out these caches and rebuild them for the winter.

Four days later they returned and reported their inability to find the caches owing to the extraordinary depth of new snow on the ice-cap. This was very serious news, and after the dogs had been thoroughly rested and fed I started myself for the ice-cap with Henson and one Eskimo. As we reached the vicinity of the first cache it began snowing, rendering immediate search impossible. The Eskimo, fearful of a storm, slipped away unobserved and started back for the Lodge, which he reached four days later, weak from hunger and half frozen. Henson and I were imprisoned in a tent for six days, when the storm ceased.

Standing at the entrance of the tent, the accumulation of new snow was level with my eye. The actual snowfall on a level was three and a half feet. Two days were spent in an exhaustive but vain search for the caches, all buried, irrecoverable, lost in the snow. I felt like a man shipwrecked and cast away on a desert shore with only the clothes on his back. I must begin again at the very bottom, with the previous season's work blotted out entirely. Nearly all my biscuit and milk, all the compressed pea soup, and every ounce of two fundamental items of an Arctic sledge's equipment, rations of pemmican and alcohol, in all a ton and a half, were gone. The chances were ten to one against accomplishing anything under such an enormous handicap.

Returning to the Lodge on October 20, I found the entire land buried as I had never seen it before. The following days were gloomy ones at the Lodge. The idea of giving up that for which we were there never occurred to us, but the question how to accomplish our object remained unanswered.

The sun was seen for the last time on October 23. During the remainder of October and November five more deer were added to our stock. The preparation of the house for the winter was completed. Several short sledge trips were undertaken, and a general plan of campaign and scheme of equipment and rations for the spring march were decided upon and two sledges were completed. Reindeer meat for ourselves and walrus for the dogs must take the place of pemmican. Coal oil must serve as a substitute for alcohol. I had nothing with which to replace the invaluable pea soup, only 130 pounds of biscuit in tins and less than two cases of milk. The necessary amount of the biscuit must be made up from bulky ship's biscuit in open boxes, and by going without milk during the winter we would have a little more than half a ration for the ice-cap journey.

The light of the December moon was utilized for a sledge trip to Cape York, with Mr. Lee as my companion. Stormy weather delayed us so much that on our return we ran short of provisions, and the last march, from Saunders Island to the Lodge, was a forced one of forty-six hours without food or sleep. Off Cape Parry, while travelling on young ice, we had a narrow escape from a mishap, a large berg disrupting near us and breaking up the ice on which we were travelling.

The holidays were uneventful, and but for the presence of many natives from Karnah, the nearest and this winter the largest of all the native settlements, they would have been among the bluest of our winter days. During the January moon I made a five days' trip to various settlements on the Sound. Lee and Henson also made shorter journeys, but most of the time was occupied in work on our equipment. February and the first half of March were devoted to the same work, relieved by two or three deer hunts and sledge trips to various settlements on the Gulf for material for clothing, dog harness, and so on.

The sun was seen for the first time on February 17. The latter part of the month Mr. Lee returned from a trip to Robertson Bay [on the coast of Baffin's Bay north of the camp] in bad condition and was laid up for two weeks or more. On March 12 Matt Henson started south for Wolstenholme Sound and Petawak Glacier to purchase dogs. The week following his departure I utilized in sledging supplies to the moraine, and on March 20 met him at Peterawick on his return. Sending Henson home to rest, I remained at Peterawick five days purchasing dogs and walrus meat and engaging men to go on the ice-cap. On March 27 I reached the Lodge again with a cavalcade of nine sledges carrying my purchases. I found Mr. Lee nearly recovered.

The next four days were occupied in transporting the sledges to the moraine, fitting out four Eskimos who were to accompany us with suitable gear, and putting the last touches to our own outfit. All my records, journals and valuable papers were deposited under the house, where I hoped they would be safe from fire and prying natives. The remaining provisions and more valuable articles were taken into the house, and leaving everything to the honesty of my native friends, in whose hands I left letters to cover the contingency of our non-return, we were ready to start.

On Monday, April 1, I left Anniversary Lodge with Mr. Lee, Henson, six Eskimos, and sixty-three dogs. Two of the Eskimos were to accompany us only for the day. The other four, forming the supporting party, would accompany us as far as the site of the previous season's pemmican cache, 124 miles distant on the inland ice. The day was clear and calm. The material on and at the edge of the ice-cap was divided into six loads, and we made an advance of twelve miles. Mr. Lee was not in such a condition as I could have wished, but with Yankee grit he insisted on going, and I believed it to be better for him than remaining behind alone. The following three marches were interrupted by further, but, with one exception, unsuccessful searches for the lost caches. Six inches of a seven-foot pole, marking the equinoctial camp, still projected above the snow. The discovery of this cache enabled me to replace my miscellaneous packages of ship's biscuits with sealed tins and complete my milk ration. This cache and the bamboo pole ten miles distant, which on the previous March had stood twelve feet above the snow and now showed less than three feet, were the only remaining traces of our previous year's work and one and one-half tons of indispensable sledge supplies. One of the Eskimos deserted on the third march, and returned to the Lodge with his dogs and sledge.

Six marches more brought us to the vicinity of the big pemmican cache. The weather during this time was clear and very cold. A biting wind had nipped the toes, cheeks and noses of all of us, in Lee's case, as it afterward proved, quite severely. One entire day was spent by the whole party in an unsuccessful search for the cache. We were forced to the conclusion that the storm had broken the signal off.

On the following day three Eskimos, with a sledge and ten dogs, started back, while we continued to advance with three sledges and forty-one dogs, myself leading with eleven, Lee with fourteen, and Henson with sixteen. A combination of unfavorable circumstances made the following week an unpleasant contrast to the previous one. I was obliged now to drive a team of dogs. Having no trail to follow, it was more difficult to drive. A redistribution of the dogs, and the consequent inevitable fighting until every dog knew his place, reduced the effectiveness of their efforts, and worse than this, Lee's toe was giving him much trouble.

The fifth march brought us into a violent wind-storm, rushing down from the interior to Petermann Fjord. This delayed us two days, demoralizing our dogs, working havoc with the harness and traces, and leaving the sledges buried in over-

whelming drifts. The close of the week found us only 200 miles from the moraine. We were 7,000 feet above the sea.

The following week was more satisfactory, placing something like a hundred miles to our credit. All this time the temperature ranged from  $-10^{\circ}$  to  $-25^{\circ}$  at noon, and  $-25^{\circ}$  to  $-43^{\circ}$  at midnight. We had met the midnight sun near the end of the second week, and now had continuous sunlight.

At the beginning of the fourth week it was evident that some change must be made. The dogs had become so fatigued I could no longer drive my team into the white, trackless, objectless desert ahead, and Mr. Lee's toe was giving him such trouble as to make it well-nigh impossible for him to handle a team.

By this time a number of the dogs had given out, and made it practicable to concentrate everything in two teams and send Lee ahead to set the course. This arrangement, with the daily icing of the sledges, enabled us to cover 122 miles in the week. It was a hard one. Some of the time we were almost 8,000 feet above the sea, and the average elevation for the week was 7,700 feet. The elevation had a marked effect on ourselves and the dogs, though we were able to walk at the moderate pace of two to two and one-half miles per hour without discomfort, and keep this up ten or twelve hours. A few sharp pulls on a sledge when the dogs balked or a few yards' run would take our wind completely, and the extra exertion would be followed by bleeding at the nose. The strength of men and dogs was reduced fully one-half, the raw, frozen meat ill-supplying the place of pemmican, even had we eaten a full ration of it, which we rarely did.

With our entrance upon the fifth hundred miles a series of mishaps occurred. Up to this time not a sledge had broken, but almost simultaneously with passing the four hundredth mile a runner of the largest sled went to pieces completely. A day was lost repairing the damage, and at the end of twelve miles the new runner broke beyond repair. Having no more material for repairing the second mishap, the sledge was converted into a three-runner, and we proceeded. At the end of the next march we fed the last of the walrus meat to the dogs. Only seventeen dogs now remained to us. After this the dogs went to pieces with startling rapidity, eleven being left at the end of the week, and these in such a condition that we were obliged to man the drag-ropes ourselves. We cached nearly everything and pushed on for the land. At the end of the next march the dogs were scarcely able to walk. We left them sixteen miles from the land and 5,000 feet above the sea in charge of Lee, with instructions to feed the weakest ones to the others until our return, and with Henson, two rifles, and four days' rations on a small sledge, I started down to the land in search of musk oxen.

After some trouble with crevasses we reached the land, but before we had finished our first rest the sky became overcast, and it commenced snowing. This weather continued while we remained on land, two days and nights, and we had to find our way back to the tent through snow and fog. During this trip we travelled until we were so fatigued, and our feet so sore, lame and bruised by sharp rocks, that we could scarcely walk. We slept on the rocks, without shelter, and returned to our tent exhausted with our efforts, and disappointed at finding no fresh trace of musk oxen.

The time of our absence had been scarcely less wearing to Lee than to ourselves. He was alone with a few starving dogs in that fierce frozen desert, uncertain of our return, helpless and doomed if aught happened to us.

Two alternatives now lay before us. We could start back at once, and the 200 pounds of walrus meat reserved for dog food for the return would probably keep the dogs alive two-thirds of the distance home. Then we could drag the loads the

remaining distance ourselves. With fresh, well-fed dogs the walrus meat would have sufficed for the entire distance.

The other alternative was to give some of this meat to the dogs now, then go on with them in search of musk oxen as long as it lasted. If we found musk oxen, well and good; if not, then we must retrace those weary 500 miles, dragging our own supplies, with the certainty that one and the probability that all of us would never complete the journey. But there was a chance. We were Americans. One of us carried about him the Red, White and Blue. We could not turn back.

The decision was quickly made. Next day, dragging the sledge ourselves, we returned to the cache through the dense fog, gave the dogs an ample feed of walrus meat, and loaded everything upon the sledge except rations for the return trip, which were cached under a conspicuous tripod formed of a sledge and two ski.

The following day, with a little assistance from the dogs, we returned to the last camp. Next day we descended to the land, reaching it just in time to be storm-bound on the moraine for two days; then, with Henson and all the dogs, we went on across the land, leaving Mr. Lee again to a lonely vigil. The arduous land travel increased our appetites to a painful degree, and, having had no meat for the past three days, we were glad to make a lunch from raw frozen walrus meat intended for the dogs. Even of this we were obliged to eat sparingly, as the dogs needed it more than we.

Twelve hours of marching showed no recent traces of musk oxen, but I saw a hare, which Henson shot, and we immediately camped on a small lake, cooked, and ate it to the last morsel. It was the first square meal we had eaten since leaving Anniversary Lodge, and we appreciated it accordingly. Our spirits were materially raised by this good fortune, yet the entire absence of musk ox signs made me anxious. I began to fear that perhaps they only visited this region later in the season, or the killing of some of their number four years before had frightened the rest away permanently.

Next day, after several hours' travelling, I saw an indistinct trace of a single animal. Following it I observed the track of a calf, then other tracks, then the previous day's feeding ground of the herd. A few hours later we saw the herd itself, a group of dark spots on a terrace far up a mountain. Safe, thank God! and my poor dogs should feast till they could eat no more. Fastening the dogs and climbing cautiously the slope of the mountain, we approached within 200 yards. Beyond this there was no cover, and our eyes were so weak and unreliable with snow glare that we could not see to shoot at this distance. Lying behind a big boulder till we regained our breath, we then advanced on a run with loaded Winchesters. In a few minutes one bull, five cows and four calves were ours. The remainder of the herd disappeared in full gallop over the summit of the mountain. A two days' unsuccessful pursuit of the herd followed, and then Henson went back to the moraine after the tent sledges and so on. During his absence of three days I searched unsuccessfully for musk oxen, living during that time entirely on musk ox meat *sans* biscuit, tea or salt. On the arrival of the boys we pushed forward toward Independence Bay over a most unpromising region, up and down steep slopes, through boulder-strewn gorges, lifting, pushing, almost carrying sledge and load, double banking, sometimes travelling for hundreds of yards on sharp, snow-free rocks, and breaking the sledge every few hours. The almost complete absence of snow on the land was extremely annoying.

At the end of four days we reached the precipitous shore completely exhausted. The last pair of ski and the last wood had been used in repairing our sledge, which was already nearly worn out. Of oil we had something over a gallon, the tins having

been broken and much of it lost by the capsizing of the sledge and contact with rocks. Nearly all our foot-gear was cut to pieces by the sharp stones.

The next stage of the journey was entirely impracticable for sledges, and everything must be backed down the steep shore bluffs, then over three or four miles of crevasse-riven glacier before reaching the bay ice. In our present condition we were not equal to the task. We must have rest before advancing further, and to insure rest we must have more musk oxen. We turned back to hunt for them, but a careful search failed to discover them or any fresh tracks. Our attack and scent and the sound of our pack of dogs had evidently driven them completely out of the region, and there was nothing left for us but retreat while yet our dogs were in fair condition. The snow on the land, scant when we arrived, had been rapidly disappearing since, and at least half of the return journey to the moraine was made over bare rocks. This soon destroyed the sledge completely, and the load was transported the remaining distance partly on our backs, partly rolled up in musk ox skins, and dragged by the dogs. This consumed six days.

At the moraine Henson constructed a small sledge from a pair of ski left there for that purpose, and by a forced march reached our cache, thirty-five miles inland, in spite of a snow-storm. I had now nine dogs and sixteen days' rations of musk ox meat for them.

For ourselves I had seventeen days' rations of raw venison. We were most fortunate in having favorable weather. Snow-shoes were used continuously, the sledge runners were iced twice a day, much of our venison was fed to the dogs, and every expedient known to the Eskimos was resorted to to facilitate our progress. In spite of two days' delay from illness and one from unfavorable weather, the Lodge was reached on June 25, in the twenty-five marches. One dog reached the Lodge with us. The last of our provisions were consumed at the beginning of the last march, twenty-one miles from the Lodge.

For some ten days after our return all of us were in a debilitated condition, troubled with swollen feet and legs, shortness of breath and constant diarrhoea.

From this we gradually recovered. The *Kite* arrived in Whale Sound on July 31, but the ice prevented her from entering Bowdoin Bay. Messrs. Diebitsch and Salisbury reached the Lodge overland from McCormick Bay [to the north of the camp] on Aug. 3. Lee, Henson and I returned with them on the following day, and the *Kite* immediately proceeded to Karnah, where I took on a crew of natives for walrus-hunting in Murchison Sound, then to Littleton Island and Cape Sabine [in Smith Sound, further north], thence back to Whale Sound. We were able to enter Falcon Harbor on Aug. 11. From here an attempt was made to reach the head of Inglefield Gulf for deer, but the ice prevented, and the *Kite* entered Orliks Bay. From here we recrossed the gulf to Karnah again, and thence to Wolstenholme Sound, where a number of large bull walrus were obtained. From Wolstenholme Sound we went south to Cape York, and the ice fortunately proving favorable, we advanced eastward into Melville Bay to the Loon Mountains, where the two meteorites, the "woman" and the "dog," which for ages furnished the ancestors of the Whale Sound Eskimos with iron for their knives, were by Mr. Diebitsch's skill dragged over one and one-half miles of rock, glacier, and floating ice, and safely embarked. The larger weighs about three tons.

Returning to Camp York the *Kite*, on Sept. 1, steamed west for Jones's Sound, which was penetrated to the edge of the heavy ice. Twenty-seven miles west of Coburg Island numerous traces of Eskimo were found.

We next steamed down the west side and south of Lancaster Sound. We spoke the whaling fleet, visited an Eskimo village at Dexterity harbor, and steamed

across for Godhavn, but were caught in the middle pack and held for two days. We reached Disco on Sept. 11, sailed on the 12th, touched Turnavik, Labrador, on the 18th, and arrived in St. John's on the 21st.

The season has not been a severe one in the Smith Sound region. If it had not been for the loss of my provisions I should have accomplished my purpose.

No man could have been more fortunate in having two such loyal, brave, and sturdy comrades as stood by me—Lee, as full of sand as one of his own Connecticut beaches, and Henson, unhesitating and as tenacious of his object as a bulldog. No man could be more unfortunate in being unable to reward their courage and efforts with a full measure of success.

The mapping of the Whale Sound region and the studies and ethnological collections of the Arctic highlanders have been completed. Another year's meteorological records have been obtained, and the *Kite* brings back two of the most interesting meteors in the world.

R. E. PEARY, C. E., U. S. N.

The *Kite* has on board the most valuable collection ever brought from the Arctic regions. It is mainly the work of Prof. Dyche, of Kansas University, who collected nearly 4,000 specimens of birds, eggs, and animals in the neighborhood of Holsteinborg, besides which there were also secured during the *Kite's* cruise, 24 walruses, 3 narwhal, 25 seals, 13 polar bears, and a number of other animals. Peary secured many valuable meteorological data. He thoroughly surveyed Inglefield Gulf and the neighborhood.